BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-6187 OCTOBER 6, 1978
CLAUDIO ESKENAZI

THIS WEEK NO. 40

ANNCR:

"THIS WEEK."

FROM THE VOICE OF AMERICA, THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WEEK GONE BY...A LOOK AT SOME OF THE EVENTS, A CROSS-SECTION OF THE IDEAS, AND THE VOICES OF SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO MADE NEWS DURING THE PAST SEVEN DAYS. YOUR NARRATOR IS---------.

NARR:

THE BLOODY CIVIL WAR IN LEBANON ERUPTED ONCE AGAIN THIS WEEK IN ONE OF THE MOST INTENSE ROUNDS OF FIGHTING SINCE THE CONFLICT BEGAN MORE THAN THREE YEARS AGO. SYRIAN TROOPS OF THE ARAB LEAGUE'S PEACEKEEPING FORCE AND CHRISTIAN LEBANESE MILITIAMEN ENGAGED IN FIERCE BATTLE THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTIAN-DOMINATED DISTRICTS IN BEIRUT, AND THERE WAS HEAVY FIGHTING IN SUBURBAN AREAS AS WELL AS IN NEARBY MOUNTAIN VILLAGES. CHRISTIAN MILITIAMEN SAY AS MANY AS THREE HUNDRED PERSONS HAVE BEEN KILLED OR WOUNDED IN THE LATEST ROUND OF FIGHTING.

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SYRIA AND THE LEBANESE CHRISTIANS HAS BEEN ESCALATING STEADILY FOR MOST OF THIS YEAR, AND REPEATED EFFORTS BY LEBANESE GOVERNMENT LEADERS TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION HAVE MET WITH LITTLE SUCCESS. PRESIDENT ELIAS SARKIS WANTS THE SYRIAN FORCES TO REMAIN IN LEBANON, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HE SEEKS A GREATER ROLE FOR THE NEWLY REFORMED LEBANESE ARMY. EARLIER THIS WEEK, PRESIDENT SARKIS APPEALED FOR AN END TO THE FIGHTING AND ALSO ANNOUNCED PLANS TO FORM A NEW COALITION GOVERNMENT IN AN ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE CONFLICT.

THE SHELLING OF A MOSLEM DISTRICT OF BEIRUT BY ISRAELI NAVAL BOATS LATER IN THE WEEK AND THE CONTINUED FIGHTING IN LEBANON HAVE RAISED CONCERN THAT ISRAEL MAY AGAIN STEP IN TO PROTECT

THE CHRISTIAN FORCES. BUT U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE SAID THE UNITED STATES IS IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH ISRAELI LEADERS URGING MAXIMUM RESTRAINT IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS. AND HE WARNED THAT ISRAELI INTERVENTION WOULD VASTLY COMPLICATE EFFORTS TO BRING A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT TO THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST.

SECRETARY VANCE ALSO RULED OUT DIRECT U.S. INTERVENTION TO RESOLVE THE CIVIL WAR AND DISCOUNTED THE NOTION OF PARTITIONING LEBANON. MISTER VANCE NOTED PRESIDENT CARTER'S SUGGESTION THAT THERE BE A NEW CHARTER FOR LEBANON:

TAPE: CUT ONE -- VANCE

"WHEN THE PRESIDENT WAS TALKING ABOUT A NEW CHARTER, HE WAS TALKING ABOUT A POLITICAL CONSENSUS, A RECONCILIATION OF THE POLITICAL FORCES WITHIN LEBANON. AND IF THERE IS TO BE ULTIMATE PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE AREA, THERE HAS TO BE CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO A NEW CHARTER FOR LEBANON."

THE HEAVY FIGHTING IN LEBANON STIRRED CONCERN AT THE UNITED NATIONS -- AND INTENSIVE DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WERE UNDERWAY THROUGHOUT MUCH OF THIS WEEK TO FIND A SOLUTION. FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER LOUIS DE GUIRINGAUD PROPOSED A PULLBACK OF THE SYRIAN TROOPS AND THE DEPLOYMENT OF A BUFFER FORCE OF THE REGULAR LEBANESE ARMY WITH BOTH CHRISTIAN AND MOSLEM ELEMENTS. THE PROPOSAL WAS WELCOMED BY THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND BACKED BY THE UNITED STATES. BUT IF FAILED TO WIN THE APPROVAL OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFEZ ASSAD.

IN OTHER MIDEAST DEVELOPMENTS THIS WEEK, THE UNITED STATES CONTINUED ITS EFFORTS TO WIN SUPPORT FOR THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS. SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE MET WITH THE SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER IN NEW YORK IN AN ATTEMPT TO OVERCOME SAUDI RESERVATIONS ABOUT THE AGREEMENT. U.S. OFFICIALS REGARD SAUDI SUPPORT AS VITAL TO THE SUCCESS OF A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT.

(OPT) AND IN A SPEECH EARLIER THIS WEEK BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, JORDAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HIS COUNTRY WILL CONTINUE ITS DIALOGUE WITH THE UNITED STATES IN HOPES OF FINDING A WAY TO COOPERATE IN THE PEACE EFFORTS. BUT HE SAID JORDAN'S FINAL JUDGMENT ON THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS WILL DEPEND ON HOW WELL THEY MEET CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS -- INCLUDING TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, RESTORATION OF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND THE RESTORATION OF ARAB SOVEREIGNTY OVER EAST JERUSALEM. (END OPT)

MEANWHILE, THE WHITE HOUSE CONFIRMED THIS WEEK THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL HOST THE UPCOMING EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. VOA CORRESPONDENT DAVID GOLLUST HAS DETAILS:

TAPE: CUT TWO -- GOLLUST

"WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN JODY POWELL SAID THAT ISRAEL AND EGYPT HAVE INFORMALLY INDICATED THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF INVITATIONS FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO HOLD THEIR PEACE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS IN WASHINGTON. THE SPOKESMAN SAID THESE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL -- WITH SECRETARY OF STATE CYRUS VANCE TO BE THE CHIEF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE. AND HE SAID IT IS EXPECTED THAT THE TALKS WILL GET UNDERWAY ON OCTOBER TWELFTH -- FOLLOWING THE END OF THE JEWISH HIGH HOLY DAYS. (OPT) THE U.S. SPONSORSHIP OF THE TALKS IS ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO CARRYING FORWARD WITH THE PEACE FRAMEWORK REACHED AT THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT. AND WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN JODY POWELL STRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES INTENDS TO PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE TREATY DISCUSSIONS." (END OPT)

NARR:

IN EGYPT, PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT ORDERED A MAJOR SHAKE-UP IN THE COUNTRY'S MILITARY CIVILAN LEADERSHIP -- OSTENSIBLY OPENING THE WAY FOR YOUNGER OFFICERS AND PREPARING EGYPT FOR THE LONG TRANSITION FROM A WAR ECONOMY TO PEACE-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT. THE WAR MINISTER AND THE CHIEF-OF-STAFF WERE BOTH NAMED MILITARY ADVISERS TO PRESIDENT SADAT WHILE A NEW CABINET WAS FORMED THIS WEEK.

(OPT) EARLIER IN THE WEEK, PRESIDENT SADAT WENT BEFORE THE PEOPLES' ASSEMBLY (EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT) IN CAIRO TO REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF THE CAMP DAVID SUMMIT TALKS. VOA CORRESPONDENT DOUGLAS ROBERTS HAS DETAILS:

TAPE: CUT THREE -- ROBERTS

"MISTER SADAT DESCRIBED THE CAMP DAVID ACCORDS AS POSITIVE STEPS TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT, AND HE REPEATEDLY PRAISED PRESIDENT CARTER FOR HIS ROLE AT THE SUMMIT CONFERENCE. PRESIDENT SADAT WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF HARD-LINE ARAB STATES LED BY SYRIA, THAT ARE OPPOSED TO THE CAMP DAVID AGREEMENTS AS WELL AS THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH SUPPORTS THE HARD-LINE FRONT. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, MISTER SADAT INVITED SYRIA TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH ISRAEL. THE EGYPTIAN LEADER ALSO RENEWED HIS CALL ON JORDAN'S KING HUSSEIN TO JOIN IN THE PEACE PROCESS, SAYING THE HASHEMITE MONARCH SHOULD RESUME HIS RESPONSIBILITIES DURING TALKS ON THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP." (END OPT)

NARR:

THE UNITED STATES THIS WEEK GRANTED A VISA TO RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH AND OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS INTERIM BIRACIAL GOVERNMENT TO VISIT WASHINGTON AND OTHER AMERICAN CITIES. SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE SAID MISTER SMITH'S UPCOMING VISIT WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TALKS ON THE ANGLO-AMERICAN GOAL FOR AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE ON RHODESIA. BUT MISTER VANCE ADDED THAT THE GRANTING OF A VISA TO PRIME MINISTER SMITH DOES N-O-T REFLECT A CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY TOWARD RHODESIA. HE SAID THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION IS STILL WORKING TOWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN, ADDING THAT MISTER SMITH'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON WILL BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE THAT GOAL:

TAPE: CUT FOUR -- VANCE

"THIS WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ME TO DISCUSS WITH MISTER SMITH AND OTHERS THE QUESTION OF WHETHER THEY WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT SUBJECT WHICH I WISH TO DISCUSS WITH HIM. I THINK IF WE ARE TO FIND A SOLUTION, IT'S ESSENTIAL THAT WE DO HAVE AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE AND THIS WILL FACILITATE THAT AS WELL."

NARR:

MISTER VANCE SAID THE DECISION TO GRANT A VISA TO PRIME MINISTER SMITH ALSO REFLECTS THE FACE THAT FREE SPEECH IS A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT IN THE UNITED STATES. HE NOTED THAT 27 U.S. SENATORS HAVE INVITED MISTER SMITH TO APPEAR BEFORE THEM AND HE INDICATED THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN THE DECISION TO GRANT THE VISA.

THE U.S. DECISION TO GRANT IAN SMITH A VISA MET WITH SHARP NEGATIVE REACTION AT THE UNITED NATIONS. IN A JOINT STATEMENT, THE HEADS OF THREE U.N. COMMITTEES MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED WITH SOUTHERN AFRICA CALLED THE DECISION "DEPLORABLE." THE COMMITTEE LEADERS SAID THE ACTION CAN ONLY BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE POSSIBILITY OF REACHING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA, AND THEY URGED THE UNITED STATES TO RECONSIDER ITS DECISION. MEANWHILE, NIGERIA'S COMMISSIONER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, HENRY ADEFOPE, EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN:

TAPE: CUT FIVE -- ADEFOPE

"UNFORTUNATELY THE INVITATION WILL BE USED BY IAN SMITH AND HIS SUPPORTERS IN CONGRESS TO PROMOTE THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT AND ALSO WHIP UP SENTIMENT BOTH IN CONGRESS AND AMONG THE AMERICAN PUBLIC FOR THE POSSIBLE LIFTING OF THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE REBEL REGIME. IT WILL BE TRAGIC IF THIS INVITATION T/ IAN SMITH IS THE FIRST IN A CHAIN OF EVENTS THAT CAN LEAD ONLY TO THE ESCALATION OF THE CONFLICT, WITH THE CONSEQUENT TRAGIC LOSS OF LIVES."

NARR:

THE INTERAMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION THIS WEEK BEGAN A TEN-DAY ON-THE-SCENE INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF BASIC FREEDOMS IN NICARAGUA. THE COMMISSION SAID ITS MEMBERS HAVE RECEIVED STRONG ASSURANCES FROM THE SOMZA GOVERNMENT THAT IT WILL HAVE FREE AND UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO ALL SITES AND PLACES OF DETENTION. THE COMMISSION PLANS TO INTERVIEW POLITICIANS, OFFICIALS, CHURCHMEN, STUDENTS, BUSINESSMEN,

WORKERS AND ANY OTHER PERSONS IT FEELS NECESSARY TO TALK TO IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE FACTS.

NICARAGUAN PRESIDENT ANASTASIO SOMOZA PERSONALLY WELCOMED THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION TO HIS COUNTRY. HE URGED CONCERNED NICARAGUANY TO FREELY TESTIFY BEFORE THE GROUP, STRESSING THAT THE COMMISSION HAD COME TO NICARAGUA AT THE INVITATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT. BUT ONE OPPOSITION LEADER WHO DID TESTIFY BEFORE THE COMMISSION ALLEGED THAT GOVERNMENT AGENTS HAVE BEEN MONITORING THE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF PEOPLE SHOWING UP AT THE COMMISSION'S HEADQUARTERS.

(OPT) EARLIER IN THE WEEK, PRESIDENT SOMOZA TOLD THE VOICE OF AMERICA THAT HE IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS ANYTHING THE OPPOSITION WANTS, AS LONG AS IT IS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION. GENERAL SOMOZA ALSO MENTIONED THE EVENTUAL FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT AS A POSSIBLE, BUT BY NO MEANS CERTAIN, SOLUTION TO THE NICARAGUAN POLITICAL CRISIS:

TAPE: CUT SIX -- SOMOZA

"WE WERE DISCUSSING THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHAT KIND OF A COMPROMISE COULD BE ARRIVED AND THE MAN SAID: WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO GIVE THEM CABINET POSTS. AND I SAID: YES, AS A COMPROMISE. BUT I AM NOT SAYING I AM GOING TO DO IT, YET."

NARR: (END OPT)

MEDIATION TALKS BETWEEN THE SOMOZA GOVERNMENT AND ITS OPPOSITION ARE EXPECTED TO BEGIN IN THE NECT FEW DAYS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM GUATEMALA, THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND THE UNITED STATES.

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR POPE JOHN PAUL THE FIRST WERE HELD IN VATICAN CITY THIS WEEK. THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF CARDINALS, CARLO CONFALONIERI, DELIVERED A HOMILY SAYING THAT IN A MONTH POPE JOHN PAUL HAD BEEN ABLE TO CONQUER THE HEART OF THE

WORLD. HE PRAISED THE LATE PONTIFF'S INSTINCTIVE GOODNESS, INNATE MODESTY AND SINCERE SIMPLICITY. IN A WORLD SO FULL OF HATE AND VIOLENCE, HE SAID, POPE JOHN PAUL BROUGHT A MESSAGE OF GOODNESS. THROUGH HIS BRIEF REIGN, CARDINAL CONFALONIERI ADDED, JOHN PAUL'S MAIN CONCERN WAS PEACE AND HE WILL BE REMEMBERED AS THE POPE OF GOODNESS AND SMILES. A NEW CONCLAVE WILL BEGIN ON OCTOBER 14 TO CHOOSE THE NEXT SUCCESSOR TO SAINT PETER.

THE INFLATION RATE AT THE WHOLESALE PRICE LEVEL IN THE UNITED STATES WAS SHARPLY HIGHER IN SEPTEMBER. THIS WAS SEEN AS A SETBACK FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S ANTI-INFLATION EFFORTS, AS WE HEAR FROM VOA CORRESPONDENT DAVID GOLLUST:

TAPE: CUT SEVEN -- GOLLUST

ADMINISTRATION ECONOMISTS HAD BEEN EXPECTING INFLATIONARY PRESSURES TO SUBSIDE IN THE FINAL MONTHS OF THIS YEAR. BUT THURSDAY'S LABOR DEPARTMENT REPORT ON WHOLESALE PRICES INDICATES THERE MAY BE NO LET-UP IN THE PRICE SPIRAL. FOR SEPTEMBER, THE OVERALL PRICE PRQCE INDEX OF WHOLESALE PRODUCT ITEMS READY FOR SALE TO SUPERMARKET AND RETAIL STORES -- ROSE A SHARP NINE TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT. THIS IS A MAJOR TURNAROUND FROM AUGUST WHEN WHOLESALE PRICES ACTUALLY DECLINED. AND IT WAS THE BIGGEST ONE-MONTH INCREASE IN THE INDEX SINCE. LAST APRIL."

NARR:

THE WHOLESALE PRICE INCREASES SHOULD BE FELT AT THE RETAIL LEVEL WITHIN A MATTER OF WEEKY. THEY PRESUMABLY MEANS THAT INFLATION IN CONSUMER PRICES WILL BE GOING UP FROM THE ROUGHLY SEVEN PERCENT ANNUAL RATE WHICH PREVAILED IN JULY AND AUGUST.

ANNCR:

AND THOSE ARE SOME OF THE STORIES THAT MADE HEADLINES THIS WEEK. YOUR NARRATOR: WAS _____. JOIN US AGAIN NEXT -- WHEN THE VOA TAKES A LOOK AT THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS OF THE WEEK.

-0-

GH/RCS/PY